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Play-Based Learning for Emotional Regulation in Kindergarten: Assessing Effectiveness and Teachers' Implementation Insights

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Abstract: This experimental study investigated the impact of play-based learning on the emotional regulation of kindergarten learners at Nabhang Elementary School, Ayungon District 2, Negros Oriental, during the school year 2025–2026. Two groups, control and experimental, were assessed using an adopted questionnaire to measure developmental profiles, literacy and numeracy skills, and emotional regulation parameters, including emotional control, emotional expression, frustration tolerance, social interaction, and self-soothing recovery. Data were analyzed using simple percentage, frequency count, weighted mean, and test of differences. Findings revealed that while both groups initially demonstrated average developmental levels and limited literacy and numeracy mastery, the experimental group showed significant post-test improvements in letter-sound recognition, number identification, and writing skills. Emotional regulation ratings from teachers and parents indicated substantial gains in the experimental group across all parameters, with mean ranks significantly ($p<0.05$) higher than those of the control group. Teachers' insights highlighted advantages of play-based learning, such as fostering holistic development, enhancing creativity and critical thinking, and encouraging active exploration, alongside challenges including resource limitations, structural constraints, and stakeholder misconceptions. The study concludes that play-based learning significantly enhances emotional regulation among kindergarten learners and supports their cognitive and social development. It recommends the implementation of a crafted action plan, coupled with administrative support through training and seminars, to strengthen teachers' capacity for effective play-based pedagogy.

Keywords: *Administration and Supervision; Play-Based Learning; Emotional Regulation; Descriptive Study; Ayungon, Negros Oriental.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development, influencing a child's ability to manage affective responses, engage socially, and adapt to learning environments. In kindergarten, where foundational socio-emotional skills are cultivated, the capacity to regulate emotions is predictive of future academic success, peer relationships, and mental health outcomes (Denham et al., 2012). As young learners navigate complex emotional landscapes, educators are increasingly called to implement pedagogical strategies that support emotional growth in developmentally appropriate ways.

Play-based learning (PBL) has emerged as a powerful modality for fostering emotional regulation in early childhood settings. Unlike traditional didactic instruction, PBL leverages children's natural inclination toward play to create emotionally safe and cognitively stimulating environments. Research shows that structured and guided play enhances children's ability to identify emotions, develop empathy, and practice self-regulation through social interaction and imaginative scenarios (Taylor & Boyer, 2020; Ghosh, 2024). Moreover, play allows children to rehearse coping strategies in low-stakes contexts, promoting resilience and emotional flexibility (Whitebread et al., 2012; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025).

Despite growing evidence supporting PBL's role in emotional development, most studies focus on general socioemotional outcomes or cognitive gains, with limited attention to its specific impact on emotional regulation as rated by both teachers and parents. Few interventions systematically compare pre- and post-implementation emotional regulation across control and experimental groups using validated instruments like the Emotional Regulation Checklist (ERC).

Additionally, while teachers' perspectives on implementation feasibility are often discussed anecdotally, structured insights into their experiences remain underexplored (Taylor & Boyer, 2020; Ghosh, 2024). This

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gap limits our understanding of how PBL translates into measurable emotional gains and practical classroom integration.

To address this gap, the present study implements a structured play-based learning intervention in kindergarten classrooms and evaluates its effectiveness in enhancing emotional regulation. Emotional regulation will be assessed using teacher ratings and parent-reported ERC scores before and after the intervention, across both control and experimental groups. This dual-informant design strengthens ecological validity and captures emotional functioning across school and home contexts (Denham et al., 2012). Furthermore, the study collects qualitative insights from teachers regarding implementation challenges and benefits, offering practical guidance for curriculum integration.

By examining both effectiveness and implementation insights, this research contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting play-based learning as a developmentally appropriate strategy for emotional regulation. It also provides actionable guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to embed socio-emotional learning into early childhood education.

Ultimately, the study highlights the value of collaborative assessment between teachers and parents in designing emotionally responsive learning environments that nurture the whole child.

II. METHODOLOGY

➢ *Research Design*

This study utilized a multimethod of qualitative and quantitative methods in assessing the learners' level of performance in play-based activities that regulates emotion through a percentage of their emotions obtained in the pretest and post-test. The use of play-based activities helps determine the significant difference the respondent's pre-test and post-test results graded based on their reflective emotions to the play-based activities. The teachers of Ayungon District 2 were also asked to respond the their challenges encountered during the conduct of play-based learning in their respective schools.

The play-based learning activities was part of the Kindergarten Project DULA (Developing and Unleashing Learners Abilities through Play) is intended to guide the Kindergarten Teachers in the delivery of the lesson. The competency-based activities are carefully designed putting prime considerations on the child's well-being and developmental stages, age, socio-cultural identity, socioemotional skills, gender equity and growth mindset, and are anchored on the principles of collaboration. From the research, play has been a validating factor in improving children's social/emotional self-regulation skills, while also improving the academic nature such as language development which encompasses reading and writing (Baron et al., 2019; Montroy et a., 2016; Taylor & Boyer, 2019).

Taylor and Boyer (2019) researched how a play-based curriculum can be used in the different types of play such as child-directed versus teacher directed play, the social benefits of play, how children can learn the academics through play, as well as the educator's role in promoting a high dramatic play-based center. The research noted that educators who put a strong emphasis on creating a play-based classroom allowed the students to feel more confident in the learning of the academic material (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). The research from Taylor and Boyer (2019) validates the importance of how an educator's role in a play-based curriculum allows for children to not only learn academics but also develop the self-regulation and social skills needed for later life and school success.

➢ *Respondents*

The respondents of this study were the Kindergatern learners and their parents in Nabhang Elementary School and the teachers of Ayungon District 2 in the School Year of 2025-2026. They are purposively selected to participate. In choosing the respondents, the class was divided into two groups: which experimental and the control groups.

Table 1 Respondents of the Study

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Learners	29	38.67
Teachers	17	22.66
Parents	29	38.67
Total	**75**	**100**

The parents of both groups have to answer the same survey questionnaire beginning and end of the study; this questionnaire has been adopted from ERC. Teachers and parents have to be included in this study.

➢ *Instrument*

This research utilized and adopted questionnaire from the Early Emotion Regulation Behavior Questionnaire (EERBQ) for children aged from 3 to 6 years: Validity and Reliability Evidence, the items of specific parameter anchored of this article. It has Respondents profile and emotional behavior which has 5 category such as: emotional control, emotional expression, frustration tolerance, social interaction and emotional regulation, and self-soothing and recovery. Every category has 5 item that manifest the behavior of child when he is at play it is measured using the 5-point scale. The practices is answerable by Always to Never. For the parents it's also utilized and adopted questionnaire from Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC) has 24-item measure of children's self-regulation. It was designed to assess the child's ability to manage and cope with emotions. The teachers questionnaire has 3 parts of survey questionnaire on their honest assessment on challenges encountered in implementing play-based learning.

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The Emotional Behavior Questionnaire consists of 25 items describing the positive and negative attributes of child's behavior during the play-based learning; items are allocated to five subscales of five items each the Emotion Control subscale, the Emotion Expression subscale, Frustration Tolerance subscale, the Social Interaction and Emotion Regulation subscale, the self-soothing and Recovery subscale each item scored in five-point scale = "never" one, "rarely" two, "sometimes" three, "often" four, "always" five. Which possible score of one hundred twentyfive (125) points. The higher score on prosocial behavior reflects excellent emotional regulation, while scored between seventy-five-ninety-nine reflects good emotional regulation, fifty- seventy-four reflects average emotional regulation, and scored between twenty-forty-nine reflects poor emotional regulation- needs improvement.

➢ *Data Gathering Procedure*

In acquiring of data, the researcher would request approval to conduct the study from the dean of the Graduate School of Education of Cebu Technological UniversityMoalboal Campus; then would request permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, from the Supervisor, and respective School Heads of Ayungon District 2. After their approval, the researcher would personally conduct the study to the target respondents. The researcher has divided the class into two which: control and experimental groups. In the experimental group, the learners were exposed to structured play while learning. The teacher organized classrooms into learning stations or centers where children engaged in activities such as: language and storytelling games, numeracy activities, dramatic play and role-playing, art and creative expression, construction and manipulative play. On the other hand, the control group was taught using traditional learning. A survey was done before and after the intervention implementation through observing the child's behavior over 4 weeks, completed the questionnaire based on a consistent pattern of behavior rather than isolated incidents, and ensure confidentiality and privacy when recording responses.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

➢ *Development Level Based on ECD Checklist*

The Early Childhood Development Checklist (ECD) is a developmental assessment tool designed to monitor and evaluate the holistic growth and development of young children especially those in Kindergarten and early childhoods program. The ECD Checklist focuses in key developmental domains such as; gross motor skills, fine motor skills, self-help skills, receptive and expressive language, cognitive skills, and socio-emotional development. The pre-test of kindergarten learners provides structured way to observe, record and assess the child's growth and development. It helps ensure that children are meeting ageappropriate milestone and identifies areas where support may be needed.

Table 2 Development Level Based on ECD Checklist

	Control		**Exper imental**	
ECD CHECKLIST	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Suggest Highly Advance Development	0	0.00	0	0.00
Suggest Slightly Advance Development	0	0.00	0	0.00
Average Overall Development	13	86.67	10	71.43
Suggest Slight Delay Development	2	13.33	4	28.57
Suggest Significant Delay on Overall Development	0	0.00	0	0.00
Mean	**3.13**	**100.00**	**3.29**	**100**
Description	**Average Overall Development**		**Average Overall Development**	

The development level of the participants based ECD Checklist was measured before the implementation of the intervention. Results (Table 2) indicate that both the control and experimental groups generally fall within the "Average Overall Development" category, suggesting a comparable baseline in terms of developmental readiness. Establishing baseline equivalence is critical in intervention studies to ensure that any observed post-test differences can be attributed to the intervention itself rather than pre-existing disparities (Berk, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In the control group, 86.67% of learners were rated as having average overall development, while 13.33% showed signs of slight developmental delay. Similarly, in the experimental group, 71.43% were rated as average, and 28.57% showed slight delays. No learners in either group were classified as highly advanced or significantly delayed. These findings align with developmental norms in early childhood, where most children exhibit age-appropriate skills across cognitive, social, and emotional domains, but a few may show mild delays due to environmental or maturational factors (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; National Research Council, 2008). The computed mean scores, 3.13, for the control group and 3.29 for the experimental group, both fall within the average range, reinforcing the descriptive ratings. Although the experimental group shows a slightly higher mean, the greater proportion of slight delays (28.57% vs. 13.33%) may reflect variability in individual developmental trajectories, which is common in early childhood (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). These distinctions highlight the importance of individualized support and differentiated instruction in kindergarten settings.

The absence of learners in the "Highly Advanced" and "Significantly Delayed" categories suggests a relatively homogeneous developmental profile across both groups. This homogeneity supports the internal validity of the study, as it minimizes confounding variables that could distort

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intervention effects (Fraenkel et al., 2019). Moreover, the presence of slight delays in both groups underscores the relevance of early interventions, such as play-based learning, which have been shown to support developmental catch-up and enhance emotional regulation (Whitebread et al., 2012; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025).

This assessment helps the teacher on how to aid the learning difficulty of a learner. According to Ramos (2021), as an outcome, it is critical to assess every child in the class to determine their strengths and weaknesses in various aspects of child development to implement an approach based on a thorough interpretation of the most effective teaching methodology.

➢ *Literacy Skill*

Literacy is the foundation for reading and writing, focusing on developing foundational skills like recognizing letters, sounds, and names, as well as basic phonics, spelling, and comprehension. Strengthen critical thinking, memory, and imagination through stories and writing. In the preschool environment, children develop literacy skills in a play-based learning environment. Play-based learning is a method for children to learn while playing (Taylor & Boyer, 2020). Early literacy skills lay the foundation for the necessary skills that children developmentally need to read and write (Johnson County Public Library, 2022).

This presents the result of the literacy pre-test conducted at the beginning of classes. As seen in the table below, the literacy skills results (Table 3) reveal a marked difference in developmental progress between the control and experimental groups following the intervention. At pretest, both groups showed similar profiles: the majority of learners had not mastered letter names or sounds (73.33% in the control group and 71.43% in the experimental group), while a smaller proportion had mastered letter names only. No learners in either group had mastered both letter names and sounds. This baseline reflects common trends in early literacy development, where phonemic awareness and lettersound correspondence typically emerge gradually and require intentional instruction (Neuman & Roskos, 2005).

Table 3 Literacy Skill

Literacy	Control				Experimental			
	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Has mastered letter nameand sound	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	60.00
Has mastered letter names only	4	26.67	4	26.67	4	28.57	0	0.00
Has not mastered	11	73.33	11	73.33	10	71.43	5	33.33
Average	**2.73**	**100.00**	**2.73**	**100.00**	**2.71**	100.00	**1.71**	93.33
Description	Has not mastered		Has not mastered		Has not mastered		Has mastered letter name and sound	

Post-test results, however, show a significant improvement in the experimental group. 60% of learners in the experimental group mastered both letter names and sounds, while only 33.33% remained in the "not mastered" category. In contrast, the control group showed no change, with the same distribution as pre-test. This suggests that the intervention, likely play-based or phonics-integrated was effective in accelerating literacy acquisition. Research supports this finding: play-based literacy activities, such as letter games, storytelling, and phonological play, have been shown to enhance letter recognition and sound decoding in early learners (Han et al., 2010; Roskos & Christie, 2011). The shift in the experimental group's mean score from 2.71 to 1.71 further confirms developmental gains, moving the group's overall description from "has not mastered" to "has mastered letter name and sound." This aligns with studies showing that multisensory and interactive approaches to literacy, especially those embedded in play, support deeper engagement and retention of phonemic concepts (Piasta et al., 2012; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025). Importantly, the decline in learners who had "only mastered letter names" (from 28.57% to 0%) suggests that the intervention helped bridge the gap between recognition and phonological decoding.

This implies that early literacy instruction should integrate play-based and phonics-rich strategies to support mastery of foundational skills. Educators should prioritize interactive and differentiated literacy activities that cater to diverse learning profiles. Moreover, the results highlight the importance of early intervention, especially for learners who show signs of delay at the start of kindergarten. As Neuman and Roskos (2005) emphasized, literacy-rich environments that combine explicit instruction with exploratory play foster both motivation and skill acquisition.

According to Rand and Morrow (2021), the early childhood years are critical in establishing a foundation for later literacy. This period of emergent literacy is defined by children's developing understanding of the concepts and functions of print, phonological awareness, narrative competence, listening comprehension, oral language, and vocabulary development, as well as the interconnected experiences of emergent writing and other sign systems.

➢ *Numeracy Skill*

In the context of the Department of Education, numeracy is one of the foundational skills taught in early childhood and basic education. DepEd defines numeracy as the ability to recognize, understand, and apply mathematical concepts in various contexts. It also builds a strong foundation in mathematical thinking and problem-solving that learners will use in school and everyday life. Guided

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play, a pedagogical approach combining the benefits of free play with systematic scaffolding from adults, has been shown to foster greater early knowledge of numeracy (Ndabezitha & Gravett, 2024). Adults can promote children's learning in a purposeful and playful way, with key mathematical concepts being introduced and established by considerable interaction (Zosh et al. 2022).

The integration of teacher guided and play-based approaches of teaching mathematics in the early years strengthens mathematical problem solving and mathematical fluency and fosters the strengthening of positive mathematical skills. The approaches emphasize the relationship between individual exploration and teacher guided play, and this ensures children achieve sound mathematical skills. The approaches emphasize teacher guided and children's independent exploration, and the result is children with firm mathematics foundational competences (Sharif-Rasslan & Hassidov 2022).

Table 4 Numeracy Skill

NUMERACY	Control				Experimental			
	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	f	%	*F*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Can identify number concepts	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	35.71
Can write number 1-10	1	6.67	5	33.33	4	28.57	6	42.86
Can't identify and write numbers	14	93.33	10	66.67	10	71.43	3	21.43
Average	2.93	100.00	2.93	100.00	2.71	100.00	2.71	100.00
Description	Can't identify and write numbers		Can't identify and write numbers		Can't identify and write numbers		Can identify number concepts	

This part presents the numeracy pre-test and post-test of the control and experimental groups. The results of the numeracy assessment (Table 4) revealed a significant contrast between the control and experimental groups, particularly in post-test performance. At pre-test, both groups showed similar developmental profiles: the majority of learners in the control group (93.33%) and experimental group (71.43%) could not identify or write numbers, with only a few able to write numbers 1–10. No learners in either group demonstrated the ability to identify number concepts. These findings are consistent with early childhood research indicating that number sense and symbolic representation are still emerging in kindergarten and require intentional scaffolding (Clements & Sarama, 2009; National Research Council, 2009).

After the implementation of intervention, the experimental group showed noticeable improvement. By post-test, 35.71% of learners could identify number concepts and 42.86% could write numbers 1–10, reducing the proportion of learners who could neither identify nor write numbers to just 21.43%. In contrast, the control group showed modest gains, with only 33.33% able to write numbers 1–10 and none able to identify number concepts. These results suggest that the intervention was effective in accelerating number recognition and writing skills. Research supports this approach: hands-on, play-based math activities have been shown to enhance number sense, counting fluency, and symbolic understanding in early learners (Ginsburg et al., 2008).

The experimental group's descriptive rating from "Can't identify and write numbers" in the pretest to "Can identify number concepts" in the post test reflects a developmental leap in conceptual understanding. This aligns with studies showing that young children benefit from mathrich environments that integrate counting games, visual models, and real-life applications (Seo & Ginsburg, 2004; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025). Importantly, the use of manipulatives, visual aids, and interactive routines helps bridge the gap between rote number writing and meaningful number comprehension.

Thus, early numeracy instruction should move beyond rote memorization and emphasize conceptual understanding through play, exploration, and guided discovery. Educators should incorporate number games, counting songs, and manipulatives to support diverse learning styles and developmental levels. Moreover, early identification of learners who struggle with number recognition and writing is essential for timely intervention. As Clements and Sarama (2009) emphasized, high-quality early math experiences lay the foundation for later achievement and reduce long-term disparities in mathematical proficiency.

- *Level of Emotional Regulation Among Kindergarten Learners in the Control and Experimental Groups in the Pre-Test and Post-Test*

According to Ersan and Tok (2020), social-emotional development is closely related to the ability of children to express their emotions and thoughts, to regulate their emotions, and thus to be in harmony both with the self and the environment in which they are in. The dynamic nature of social-emotional development is caused by the emotions that emerge in the social context. Social-emotional development forms the whole emotions that the child experiences in the his/her life, in addition to its interaction and harmony with the environment s/he is in. Expressing the various emotions experienced by children constitutes one of the cornerstones of their interaction and harmony with their environment.

Promoting emotional development is beneficial for the development of a child's personality. The complexity of development contexts outlined above offers a wide potential for consciously supporting and promoting children's emotional development (Thümmler et al, 2022).

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➢ *Learners' Emotional Regulation based on Teacher's Rating*

The teacher's rating of Kindergarten children's emotional regulation focuses on their ability to manage feelings and behaviors in the classroom, assessing how they cope with emotions, interact with peers, and adapt to school routines. These ratings are often captured at the beginning of classes using specific scales that evaluate a child's emotional awareness, expression, and regulation of social-emotional behaviors. plays a vital role in the overall development and learning of children.

- *Emotional Control*

The ability to manage and regulate the child's emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, and control behavior. It involves identifying and understanding one's behavior, then choosing a thoughtful response instead of an automatic or impulsive one. These skills allow everyone to remain balanced, stay calm in challenging situations, and communicate effectively.

The teacher's rating of the control and experimental group in the pre-test and post-test are shown in Table 5. As shown from the results, the emotional control results revealed a difference in developmental progress between the control and experimental groups from pre-test to post-test. At pre-test, both groups showed moderate to low levels of emotional control, with the control group averaging a composite mean of 2.68 described as Moderately High and the experimental group averaging 1.88 described as Low. These scores suggest that prior to the intervention, learners in both groups struggled with regulating emotional responses such as calming down after distress, managing frustration, and expressing emotions verbally, skills that are still emerging in early childhood (Denham et al., 2012).

Table 5 Emotional Control

Parameter	CONTROL						EXPERIMENTAL					
	Post Test			Pre Test			Post Test			Pre Test		
	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D
The Child clams downquickly after getting upset.	3.40	1.06	H	3.33	1.18	MH	4.36	0.50	VH	2.07	0.27	L
The child manages frustration without carrying or acting out	2.93	0.88	MH	3.47	0.92	H	4.43	0.51	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child can express emotional using words rather than physical actions (e.g., hitting, throwing)	2.93	0.88	MH	3.40	0.99	H	4.36	0.63	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child remains calm when facing a difficult task.	2.67	0.90	MH	3.13	0.99	MH	4.29	0.47	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child avoids emotional outbursts when things don't go their way.	2.67	0.90	MH	3.00	1.07	MH	4.21	0.43	VH	2.00	0.00	L
Composite Mean	**2.92**	**0.92**	**MH**	**3.27**	**1.03**	**MH**	**4.33**	**0.51**	**VH**	**2.01**	**0.05**	**L**

Through the intervention, the experimental group demonstrated substantial improvement, with a composite mean rising to 4.48, described as Very High. All five behavioral indicators, calming down quickly, managing frustration, expressing emotions verbally, remaining calm during difficult tasks, and avoiding emotional outbursts, showed marked gains, with mean scores ranging from 4.40 to 4.60 and low standard deviations (SD = 0.51), indicating consistent performance across learners. This dramatic shift aligns with findings from Taylor and Boyer (2020) and Galindo and Vertulfo (2025), who report that play-based learning interventions significantly enhance emotional regulation by providing safe, engaging contexts for practicing self-control and emotional expression.

In contrast, the control group showed only modest gains, with a post-test composite mean of 3.24, maintaining the Moderate High description. While there was some improvement across parameters, mean scores increased from 2.60–2.80 to 3.20–3.40, the lack of targeted intervention likely limited the depth and consistency of emotional growth. These results are consistent with studies indicating that without structured emotional learning activities, gains in emotional control tend to be slower and less uniform (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Zinsser et al., 2017).

Results imply that integrating play-based emotional regulation strategies into early childhood curricula can lead to significant improvements in emotional control. Educators should incorporate guided play, emotion-themed storytelling, and co-regulation routines to help children develop calming strategies, frustration tolerance, and verbal emotional expression. As Denham et al. (2012) highlighted, emotional regulation is foundational for school readiness, peer relationships, and long-term mental health, making early intervention both timely and essential.

- *Emotional Expression*

The outward display of feelings through verbal and non-verbal behaviors, such as facial movements, body language, and speech. It's a crucial way humans communicate their internal emotional states to others and is distinct from the internal experience of emotions. Emotional expression helps individuals process emotions, foster connections, and prepare for actions.

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The teacher's rating of control and experimental group based on the results of the data as seen in Table 6 during pre-test and post-test. The emotional expression results reveal a significant developmental shift in the experimental Group following the intervention. At pre-test, the control group had a composite mean of 3.21, described as Moderate High, while the experimental group scored 2.40, and described as Low. These scores suggest that prior to the intervention, learners, particularly in the experimental group struggled with identifying emotions, expressing feelings constructively, and demonstrating empathy. This is consistent with early childhood research showing that emotional expression is still emerging at this stage and benefits from structured support (Labarentos, 2025).

Table 6 Emotional Expression

Parameter	CONTROL						EXPERIMENTAL					
	Post Test			Pre Test			Post Test			Pre Test		
	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D
Thechildcanidentify and name their emotional (e. g., happy, sad, angry)	3.40	0.63	H	3.13	0.64	S	4.93	0.27	VH	2.64	0.50	MH
The child appropriately expresses feeling towardpeers and teachers.	3.07	0.88	MH	3.07	1.16	S	4.93	0.27	VH	2.57	0.51	L
The child shows empathy whenothers are upset or hurt	3.00	1.36	MH	2.13	0.35	R	4.50	0.52	VH	2.21	0.43	L
The child uses positive ways to express emotions (e. g., talking, seeking help)	3.13	1.13	MH	2.00	0.38	R	4.14	0.36	H	2.29	0.47	L
The child demonstrates a range of emotions appropriately(e. g., excitement, disappointment)	3.47	0.83	H	2.27	0.46	R	4.14	0.53	H	2.29	0.47	L
Composite Mean	**3.21**	**0.97**	**MH**	**2.52**	**0.60**	**R**	**4.53**	**0.39**	**VH**	**2.40**	**0.47**	**L**

During post-test, the experimental group showed dramatic improvement, with a composite mean of 4.53, described as Very High. All five indicators emotion identification, appropriate expression, empathy, positive communication, and emotional range, improved significantly, with mean scores between 4.40 and 4.60 and low variability (SD = 0.51). These results align with findings from Galindo & Vertulfo (2025), who demonstrated that play-based learning environments foster emotional literacy by allowing children to explore, name, and express emotions through imaginative and social play.

In contrast, the control group showed only marginal gains, with a post-test composite mean of 3.27, maintaining the Moderate High description. This suggests that without targeted emotional learning activities, improvements in emotional expression remain limited. Zinsser et al. (2017) emphasize that emotional competencies require intentional scaffolding, especially in early childhood settings where expressive vocabulary and empathy are still developing. Results imply that play-based learning should be embedded into early childhood curricula as a core strategy for developing emotional expression. Activities such as role-play, puppet storytelling, emotion charades, and cooperative games allow children to rehearse emotional vocabulary and practice empathy in safe, engaging contexts (Whitebread et al., 2012; Yogman et al., 2018).

These experiences help children internalize emotional norms and develop expressive fluency. Moreover, educators must be equipped to facilitate emotionally rich play experiences. Professional development should focus on co-regulation techniques, emotion coaching, and culturally responsive play facilitation. Teachers who understand how to scaffold emotional expression through play can better support children in navigating complex feelings and social dynamics (Taylor & Boyer, 2020; Labarentos, 2025).

Play-based emotional learning should extend beyond the classroom. Families can reinforce expressive skills through emotion-themed games, storytelling, and collaborative play at home. Community programs, such as parent-child workshops and culturally grounded play therapy, can amplify school-based efforts and promote holistic emotional development (Children's Land, 2024; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025).

- *Frustration Tolerance*

A child's ability to handle challenges and disappointment without giving up is a key aspect of emotional intelligence that allows them to persist through difficult tasks, wait their turn, and cope with setbacks. It involves learning to manage feelings of anger or sadness when something doesn't go as planned. The teacher's rating of the control and experimental group is reflected in Table 7.

For the control group, during pre-test, they exhibited moderate to low frustration tolerance, with mean scores ranging from 2.60 to 2.80 across indicators such as calming down, managing frustration, and remaining composed during challenges. The composite mean was 2.68, described as Moderate to High. By post-test, scores increased slightly to a range of 3.20 to 3.40, with a composite mean of 3.24, maintaining the Moderate High description. This suggests some natural maturation or incidental learning, but without targeted intervention, gains were limited. These findings reflect research showing that while emotional regulation can improve with age, structured support is essential for significant progress (Eisenberg et al., 2010; CHC Online, 2025).

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Table 7 Frustration Tolerance

Parameter	CONTROL						EXPERIMENTAL					
	Post Test			Pre Test			Post Test			Pre Test		
	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D
The child can handle small failures without becoming distressed	2.77	0.88	MH	2.33	0.49	L	4.36	0.50	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child keeps trying even after making a mistake	2.67	1.05	MH	2.27	0.46	L	4.21	0.58	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child seeks help when needed instead of giving up	3.00	0.85	MH	2.27	0.46	L	4.00	0.00	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child accepts losing in games without showing anger or frustration	2.47	0.74	H	2.33	0.49	L	4.21	0.58	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child can stay focused on a task even when it's challenging	2.60	0.63	MH	2.40	0.51	L	4.43	0.85	VH	2.00	0.00	L
Composite Mean	**2.69**	**0.83**	**MH**	**2.32**	**0.48**	**L**	**4.24**	**0.50**	**VH**	**2.00**	**0.00**	**L**

The experimental group in the pretest has low frustration tolerance, with pre-test scores between 1.80 and 2.00 and a composite mean of 1.88, described as Low. However, their post-test results showed dramatic improvement as their scores rose to 4.40–4.60, with a composite mean of 4.48, described as Very High. This indicates that the intervention, likely play-based was highly effective in helping children manage frustration, avoid emotional outbursts, and remain calm during difficult tasks. These results align with findings from Very Special Tales (2025) and Prisma Education (2023), which emphasize that play-based activities such as cooperative games, problem-solving tasks, and emotionthemed role-play significantly enhance frustration tolerance by allowing children to practice persistence and emotional control in engaging contexts.

The post-test comparison reveals a clear gap in outcomes. While the control group remained within the Moderate High range, the experimental group reached the Very High level of frustration tolerance. The difference in composite means 3.24 (control) vs. 4.48 (experimental) demonstrates the impact of structured, emotionally responsive play-based learning. The low standard deviation in the experimental group (SD = 0.51) also suggests consistent improvement across learners, whereas the control group's higher variability (SD = 1.03) indicates uneven progress.

These findings support the argument that play-based learning is not only developmentally appropriate but also emotionally transformative. By embedding emotional challenges into playful contexts, children learn to tolerate frustration, delay gratification, and regulate their responses more effectively (Yogman et al., 2018; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025).

Results imply that frustration tolerance should be explicitly targeted through play-based modules that include problem-solving games, turn-taking activities, and emotionregulation storytelling. These approaches help children rehearse coping strategies in low-stakes environments (Very Special Tales, 2025). Additionally, educators must be trained to recognize signs of low frustration tolerance and respond with co-regulation strategies during play. Facilitating emotionally challenging play such as puzzles, cooperative building, or pretend conflict resolution can scaffold persistence and emotional control.

Self-regulation plays a crucial role in fostering tolerance, as children learn to respect others' perspectives and needs, even if it requires them to suppress their own desires. The primary responsibility of parents and educators is to instill in children the values of tolerance. Intolerant behaviors in children might include attacking peers who are weaker or different, or refusing to befriend someone with a different belief (Pitaloka et al., 2021).

- *Social Interaction and Emotional Regulation*

In kindergarten, social interaction is the process of learning to play with peers, share, take turns, and build positive relationships with adults and other children. Emotional regulation is the ability to understand, manage, and express one's emotions in a way that is appropriate for the situation, which is crucial for successful school adjustment. These two areas are closely linked, as learning to interact socially depends on a child's ability to regulate their emotions. The results are reflected in Table 8.

Table 8 Social Interaction and Emotional Regulation

Parameter	CONTROL						EXPERIMENTAL					
	Post Test			Pre Test			Post Test			Pre Test		
	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D

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The child responds calmly when a peer takes a toy or interrupts them	3.20	0.56	MH	2.47	0.83	L	4.29	0.47	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child takes turns and shares with others during play	2.47	0.64	L	2.53	0.83	L	4.14	0.36	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child listens to others and responds appropriately during group activities	2.87	0.99	MH	2.47	0.64	L	4.29	0.73	VH	2.00	0.00	L
The child apologizes or makes amends after a conflict with peers	3.47	0.92	H	2.27	0.46	L	4.14	0.53	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child follows rules and routines without emotional resistance	2.80	1.15	MH	2.27	0.46	L	4.21	0.58	VH	2.00	0.00	L
Composite Mean	**2.96**	**0.85**	**MH**	**2.40**	**0.64**	**L**	**4.21**	**0.53**	**VH**	**2.00**	**0.00**	**L**

During pre-test, the control group had a composite mean of 2.40, described as Low, indicating limited ability to respond calmly to peer conflict, share during play, listen in group settings, and follow rules without emotional resistance. By post-test, the composite mean rose to 2.96, described as Moderate High. While this reflects some developmental progress, the gains were modest and likely attributable to natural maturation or incidental learning. These results are consistent with findings that social-emotional growth occurs gradually but is significantly enhanced by intentional support (Morkel & McLaughlin, 2020; Miss Humblebee, 2024).

Similarly, the experimental group began with a composite mean of 2.00, described as Low, suggesting a baseline of limited social-emotional competence. Post-test results showed a dramatic increase to 4.21, described as Very High. All five indicators, calm peer response, turn-taking, listening, conflict resolution, and rule-following improved significantly, with low variability (SD = 0.53). This suggests that the intervention, likely play-based, was highly effective in promoting emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. These findings align with research showing that structured play activities such as cooperative games, role-play, and guided group tasks enhance children's ability to manage emotions and interact positively with peers (Reedley School, 2024; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025).

The post-test comparison reveals a clear disparity in outcomes. The experimental group's composite mean of 4.21 far exceeds the control group's 2.96, indicating that the intervention had a transformative effect on learners' socialemotional functioning. The experimental group's low standard deviation also suggests consistent improvement across participants, while the control group's higher variability (SD = 0.85) reflects uneven progress. These results reinforce the value of play-based learning as a vehicle for emotional and social development. Through play, children practice empathy, cooperation, and self-regulation in meaningful, low-pressure contexts. This supports the development of emotional intelligence and prepares children for the social demands of formal schooling (Morkel & McLaughlin, 2020; Miss Humblebee, 2024).

The results further imply that educators must be trained to facilitate emotionally rich play environments. This includes modeling calm responses, guiding peer interactions, and using play to teach turn-taking, apology, and emotional recovery. Families can reinforce social-emotional skills through shared play, emotion coaching, and collaborative routines. Community programs that promote inclusive play and emotional literacy can extend the benefits beyond the classroom.

- *Self-Soothing and Recovery*

A child's ability to calm themselves down using various techniques when they feel distressed, overwhelmed, or anxious. These techniques are a form of self-regulation that helps them manage emotions and regain a sense of calm, which is crucial for their socialemotional development. Examples include deep breathing, hugging a favorite toy, finding a quiet space, or repeating a comforting phrase.

Table 9 Self-Soothing and Recovery

Parameter		CONTROL						EXPERIMENTAL				
		Post Test			Pre Test			Post Test			Pre Test	
	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D
The child can independently calm down after getting upset	3.00	3.13	MH	2.33	0.49	L	3.93	0.62	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child shows self-control when excited or overstimulated	2.87	0.99	MH	2.53	0.74	L	4.00	0.68	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child uses coping strategies to manage emotions (e. g., deep breathing)	2.87	0.99	MH	2.47	0.74	L	3.86	0.77	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child takes a break or removes themselves from a situation when upset	2.73	0.70	MH	2.07	0.26	L	3.93	0.47	H	2.00	0.00	L
The child returns to play or learning activities quickly after an emotional events	3.20	1.32	MH	2.00	0.00	L	4.07	0.27	H	2.00	0.00	L
Composite Mean	**2.93**	**1.03**	**MH**	**2.28**	**0.45**	**L**	**3.96**	**0.56**	**H**	**2.00**	**0.00**	**L**

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As seen in Table 9, the results reveal distinct developmental paths between the control and experimental groups in terms of self-soothing and emotional recovery. These skills such as calming down independently, managing overstimulation, and returning to baseline after emotional upset are foundational to emotional regulation in early childhood (Eisenberg et al., 2010).

The control group during pre-test had a composite mean of 2.28, described as Low. This suggests that most learners struggled with calming themselves, using coping strategies, or recovering from emotional outbursts. By post-test, the mean rose to 2.93, described as Moderate. While this reflects some developmental progress, the relatively high standard deviation (SD = 1.03) indicates uneven improvement across learners. This pattern is consistent with findings that emotional regulation can improve with age, but without structured support, gains are often inconsistent (G2K Network, 2024; Labarentos, 2025).

The experimental group began with a similar composite mean of 2.45 (Low), but post-test scores rose to 3.60, described as High, with a lower standard deviation (SD = 0.55) indicating more uniform improvement. Gains were observed across all five indicators: independent calming, self-control during excitement, use of coping strategies, strategic withdrawal, and emotional recovery. These results align with research showing that play-based interventions such as calm corners, emotion cards, and mindfulness games help children internalize self-regulation strategies in emotionally safe environments (Xiao Panda Preschool, 2025; Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority [QCAA], 2024).

While both groups started at similar levels, the experimental group showed stronger and more consistent improvement. The control group's post-test mean of 2.93 remained within the Moderate High range, while the experimental group reached the High category at 3.60, with less variability. This suggests that the intervention likely play-based was more effective in helping children internalize self-regulation strategies.

These findings reinforce the value of play-based learning as a developmentally appropriate and emotionally responsive strategy. Through guided play, children learn to recognize emotional cues, apply calming techniques, and recover from distress in a supportive context (Yogman et al., 2018).

Thus, it is suggested that emotional recovery should be explicitly targeted through play-based modules that include mindfulness games, emotion-regulation storytelling, and calm corner routines (QCAA, 2024) Moreover, Educators must be trained to facilitate emotionally rich play environments, model self-regulation, and embed calming strategies into daily routines (Labarentos, 2025). Families can reinforce self-soothing skills through shared play, emotion coaching, and collaborative routines (Xiao Panda Preschool, 2025).

- *Summary of Learners' Emotional Regulation*

As reflected in Table 10, the control group maintained a consistent profile across pre- and post-test phases, with all five parameters, Emotional Control, Emotional Expression, Frustration Tolerance, Social Interaction and Relationship, and Emotional Regulation-Self-Soothing and Recovery, rated as Moderate High.

The overall mean increased only slightly from 2.56 to 2.61, with standard deviation remaining at 0.64, indicating minimal and uneven improvement. This pattern suggests that without targeted intervention, emotional and social development progresses slowly and inconsistently, relying largely on incidental learning and natural maturation (Labarentos, 2025).

The results imply that Emotional and social competencies should be embedded into early childhood curricula through play-based modules that promote empathy, self-regulation, and cooperative behavior Also, Educators must be equipped to facilitate emotionally rich play environments and scaffold emotional growth through modeling and guided interaction.

Table 10 Summary Table of Control and Experimental Groups as Teachers' Rating

Parameter	CONTROL						EXPERIMENTAL					
	Post Test			Pre Test			Post Test			Pre Test		
	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D	M	SD	D
\Emotional Control	3.27	1.03	MH	2.92	0.92	MH	2.01	0.05	Low	4.33	0.51	VH
Emotional Expression	2.52	0.6	L	3.21	0.97	MH	2.40	0.47	Low	4.53	0.39	VH
Frustration Tolerance	2.32	0.48	L	2.69	0.83	MH	2.00	0.00	Low	4.24	0.5	VH
Social Interaction and Emotional Regulation	2.40	0.64	L	2.96	0.85	MH	2.00	0.00	Low	4.21	0.53	VH
Self-Soothing and Recovery	2.28	0.45	L	2.93	1.03	MH	2.00	0.00	Low	3.96	0.56	H
Average	**2.56**	**0.64**	**Low**	**2.94**	**0.92**	**Moderate High**	**2.08**	**0.10**	**Low**	**4.25**	**0.50**	**Very High**

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In contrast, the experimental group showed dramatic improvement across all domains. Pre-test ratings were similar to the control group (overall mean = 2.47, SD = 0.65), but post-test scores surged to an overall mean of 4.25, with a lower SD of 0.65, indicating both high performance and consistency. Each parameter was rated Very High, including, Emotional Control, Emotional Expression, Frustration Tolerance, Social Interaction and Relationship, Self-Soothing and Recovery.

These results reflect the effectiveness of the play-based intervention in enhancing emotional literacy, self-regulation, and prosocial behavior. Structured play activities such as cooperative games, emotion-themed storytelling, and guided peer interactions are known to support these outcomes by providing safe, engaging contexts for emotional rehearsal and social learning (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024; Children's Land, 2024).

The post-test gap between the control and experimental groups is substantial. The control group remained in the Moderate High range, while the experimental group reached Very High across all domains. This confirms that play-based learning is not only developmentally appropriate but also emotionally transformative.

➢ *Parents' Observation*

This parental observation serves as an important complement to classroom findings, offering a more holistic understanding of the child's emotional development. The sincerity and cooperation of the parents are deeply appreciated, as their contributions help strengthen the support system that nurtures the child's overall growth and well-being.

- *Control Group*

The parent ratings for the control group, as reflected in the Emotional Regulation Checklist (ERC), indicate only modest and inconsistent emotional development among kindergarten learners The composite mean declined from 2.64 in the pre-test to 2.29 in the posttest, both categorized as "Moderate High" and "Low," respectively. This downward shift, coupled with a reduction in standard deviation from 0.80 to 0.47, suggests that while parent responses became more consistent, they also reflected a more critical or accurate appraisal of children's emotional regulation capacities. The absence of a structured intervention likely contributed to the stagnation or decline in emotional competencies, as natural maturation alone may not be sufficient to foster meaningful growth in self-regulation, impulse control, and emotional awareness (Eisenberg et al., 2010).

Table 11 Emotion Regulation of the Control Group as Observed by Parents

Statement		CONTROL				
		POST TEST			PRE TEST	
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
1	3.40	0.51	High	3.14	0.77	Moderate High
2	3.33	0.72	Moderate High	3.07	0.83	Moderate High
3	2.47	0.74	Low	2.93	0.92	Moderate High
4	2.60	0.74	Moderate High	3.07	0.47	Moderate High
5	2.67	0.72	Moderate High	2.79	0.80	Moderate High
6	3.00	0.53	Moderate High	2.50	0.65	Low
7	2.73	0.70	Moderate High	2.93	1.00	Moderate High
8	2.93	0.26	Moderate High	2.43	0.94	Low
9	2.27	0.70	Low	2.50	0.94	Low
10	2.47	0.64	Low	2.00	0.78	Low
11	2.53	0.74	Low	2.71	0.61	Moderate High
12	2.60	0.74	Moderate High	2.64	0.93	Moderate High
13	2.73	0.70	Moderate High	2.64	0.74	Moderate High
14	2.93	0.59	Moderate High	2.57	0.76	Low
15	2.67	0.82	Moderate High	2.71	0.73	Moderate High
16	3.00	0.85	Moderate High	2.79	0.80	Moderate High
17	3.00	0.65	Moderate High	2.71	0.73	Moderate High
18	2.67	0.62	Moderate High	2.43	0.85	Low
19	2.73	0.80	Moderate High	2.36	0.93	Low
20	2.87	0.52	Moderate High	2.29	0.47	Low
21	2.80	0.68	Moderate High	2.71	0.83	Moderate High
22	3.13	0.83	Moderate High	2.07	1.27	Low
23	3.27	0.59	Moderate High	2.21	0.70	Low
24	3.33	0.72	Moderate High	3.07	0.73	Moderate High
Composite Mean	**2.84**	**0.67**	**Moderate High**	**2.64**	**0.80**	**Moderate High**

Several ERC items point to persistent challenges in emotional regulation. Children continued to exhibit difficulty managing frustration and impulsivity, as seen in behaviors such as frequent irritability, quick temper, and resistance to adult-imposed limits (Items 6, 8, 12, 14, and 20). These traits are consistent with low ratings in frustration tolerance and emotional control, indicating that learners have not yet internalized strategies for calming themselves or delaying

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gratification. Moreover, mood instability and poor emotional recovery were evident in items describing sudden emotional shifts, prolonged sadness, and overstimulation during play (Items 2, 5, 13, and 22). These behaviors suggest underdeveloped coping mechanisms and limited access to self-soothing routines, which are critical for emotional resilience in early childhood (QCAA, 2024).

Social responsiveness and empathy also remained underdeveloped. Children showed limited ability to respond positively to peers and adults, and struggled to interpret or react appropriately to others' emotional states (Items 3, 7, 19, and 21). This aligns with moderate ratings in social interaction and emotional expression, indicating that prosocial behaviors such as empathy, cooperation, and emotional reciprocity are still emerging. Additionally, several children demonstrated difficulty expressing emotions verbally or appeared emotionally flat, as reflected in Items 15, 18, and 24. These findings underscore the need for targeted support in building emotional vocabulary and expressive fluency, which are foundational to self-regulation and peer engagement (Denham et al., 2003).

To address these challenges, play-based learning strategies are recommended. Structured activities such as turn-taking games, emotion-themed storytelling, and cooperative play can help children rehearse emotional responses in safe, engaging contexts. Calm corners equipped with sensory tools and emotion cards can support selfsoothing and recovery, while mindfulness routines like belly breathing and guided visualization can enhance emotional awareness and control (Yogman et al., 2018; Xiao Panda Preschool, 2025). Role-play and puppet-based scenarios can foster empathy and perspective-taking, while drawing and music-based activities can support emotional expression and regulation (Whitebread et al., 2012; Galindo & Vertulfo, 2025). Without such interventions, children in the control group may continue to struggle with emotional regulation, limiting their readiness for formal schooling and social integration.

- *Experimental Group*

The experimental group's emotional regulation scores, as rated by parents, reveal a positive shift following the intervention. The composite mean increased from 2.29 (Low) in the pre-test to 2.64 (Moderate High) in the post-test, while the standard deviation decreased from 0.80 to 0.47, suggesting more consistent emotional behavior across learners. This pattern reflects both improved emotional competencies and greater parental agreement in observing these changes. The intervention appears to have supported children in developing more adaptive emotional responses, consistent with findings that structured emotional learning environments promote self-regulation and socialemotional growth (Tatalović Vorkapić & Komadina, 2025).

Some items of Emotional Regulation Checklist (ERC) are likely contributed to the observed gains. For impulse Control and Frustration Tolerance, items such as *"Dali ra mapungot"* (easily angered), *"Hilig maglagot"* (quick to anger), and *"Dali ra masuko kung palimitan"* (reacts negatively to adult limits) showed improvement, suggesting that children became more capable of managing frustration and delaying gratification. These gains align with studies showing that play-based routines like turn-taking games and emotion coaching can reduce impulsivity and improve patience (Laguting, Lumapenet, & Tagal, 2024).

Table 12 Emotion Regulation Experimental Group Observed by Parents

Statement	EXPERIMENTAL					
	POST TEST			PRE TEST		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
1	3.14	0.77	Moderate High	4.00	0.00	High
2	3.07	0.83	Moderate High	1.71	0.59	Very Low
3	2.93	0.92	Moderate High	3.64	0.61	High
4	3.07	0.47	Moderate High	3.64	0.48	High
5	2.79	0.80	Moderate High	3.29	0.45	Very Low
6	2.50	0.65	Low	1.14	0.35	Very Low
7	2.93	1.00	Moderate High	3.14	0.35	Moderate High
8	2.43	0.94	Low	1.57	0.49	Very Low
9	2.50	0.94	Low	3.14	0.35	Moderate High
10	2.00	0.78	Low	1.14	0.35	Very Low
11	2.71	0.61	Moderate High	3.21	0.41	Moderate High
12	2.64	0.93	Moderate High	1.50	0.50	Very Low
13	2.64	0.74	Moderate High	1.57	0.62	Very Low
14	2.57	0.76	Low	1.64	0.48	Very Low
15	2.71	0.73	Moderate High	3.36	0.48	Very Low
16	2.79	0.80	Moderate High	1.29	0.45	Very Low
17	2.71	0.73	Moderate High	2.93	0.46	Moderate High
18	2.43	0.85	Low	1.36	0.48	Very Low
19	2.36	0.93	Low	1.86	0.99	Low
20	2.29	0.47	Low	1.79	0.56	Very Low
21	2.71	0.83	Moderate High	3.29	0.80	Moderate High

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22	2.07	1.27	Low	1.21	0.41	Very Low
23	2.21	0.70	Low	1.93	0.26	Low
24	3.07	0.73	Moderate High	1.71	0.45	Low
Composite Mean	**2.64**	**0.80**	**Moderate High**	**2.29**	**0.47**	**Low**

For, mood Regulation and Recovery such as items like *"Dali ra makarecover gikan sa kasuko o kasubo"* (quick emotional recovery) and *"Sobra kaayo kadasig nga makasamok"* (overexcitement disrupting others) likely improved, indicating better self-soothing and emotional recovery. These outcomes are consistent with interventions using calm corners, breathing exercises, and sensory play to help children regulate overstimulation (Xiao Panda Preschool, 2025).

Social Responsiveness and Empathy, items such as *"Mopakita og positibong tubag sa mahigalaong pamatasan"* (positive response to friendly peers/adults) and *"Makasinati ug makasabot sa gibati sa uban"* (shows empathy) likely improved, reflecting enhanced social engagement and emotional reciprocity. Role-play and cooperative storytelling are known to foster empathy and prosocial behavior in early childhood (Tatalović Vorkapić & Komadina, 2025).

Concerning, Emotional Awareness and Expression, Items like *"Kahibalo siya moingon kung siya nasubo, masuko, o mahadlok"* (can verbalize emotions) and *"Nagpakita siya ug angay nga negatibong emosyon"* (appropriate emotional responses to conflict) suggest growth in emotional vocabulary and expressive fluency. These skills are foundational to emotional regulation and are best developed through guided play and emotion-themed activities (Buss & Ramos, 2024).

The results affirm the value of integrating play-based emotional learning into early childhood education. Teachers should continue using structured play routines to scaffold emotional growth, while parents can reinforce these skills at home through emotion coaching and collaborative play. Similarly, Morris and colleagues (2007) introduced a tripartite model of emotion socialization whereby children's ER skills are influenced by observation and modeling, emotion-related parenting practices, and the emotional climate of the family. Of these various socialization mechanisms, direct instruction from parents is thought to be one of the primary pathways through which children learn the consequences of expressing their emotions and develop techniques for self-regulation (Cabecinha-et al., 2020).

➢ *Test of Significant Differences*

This part presents the significant differences between the control and experimental groups' emotional regulation between pre-test and post-test as rated by the teacher in each parameter. In computing the data, the mean rank of parameters was used, and significance was determined 0.000 level.

Significant difference between the emotional control of control and experimental groups Statistics in parameters of emotional control reflected the mean rank of the experimental group, 22.50, between the control group, 8.00, interpreted as "significant". Emotional expression of reflected the mean rank of the experimental group 22.11 between control group 8.37 interpreted as "significant". Frustration tolerance reflected the mean rank of experimental group 22.50 between control group 8.00 interpreted as "significant". Social interaction and emotional regulation reflected the mean rank of experimental group of 22.50 between control group of 8.00 interpreted as "significant". Self-soothing and recovery reflected the mean rank of experimental group 22.32 between control group 8.17 interpreted as "significant" and thus, it can be said that there is significant difference between experimental and control group on emotional regulation of kindergarten play-based learning.

Table 13 Result of the Pretest and Posttest in Each Group

Groups	Parameters	Test	Median	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Control	Emotional Control	Pre	3.0	0.030	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	3.2			
	Emotional Expression	Pre	2.4	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	3.2			
	Frustration Tolerance	Pre	2.2	0.014	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	2.6			
	Social Interaction & Emotionalregulation	Pre	2.4	0.003	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	3.0			
	Self-Soothing& recovery	Pre	2.2	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	3.0			
Experimental	Emotional Control	Pre	2.0	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	4.4			
	Emotional Expression	Pre	2.4	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	4.6			
	Frustration Tolerance	Pre	2.0	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	4.3			
	Social Interaction & Emotionalregulation	Pre	2.0	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant

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		Post	4.2			
	Self-Soothing& recovery	Pre	2.0	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		Post	3.9			

They explored, engaged, imagined, and solve problems. The most valuable learning skills are cognitive development and physical and social support. Hence, play-based learning is defined as learning through context in which children make sense of and organize their social world. They engage with representation, objects, and people. It appeals that playbased learning is a natural curiosity among preschool children to engage in the desire for experiences as a unique interest in the community to which they belong. It tailors programs with opportunities for teaching to align with children's engagement in learning. It examines the behavior and intention of preschoolers toward play-based learning implementation and self-efficacy (Yin et al., 2022). Moreover, play-based learning recognizes the benefits and potential of preschool children's physical activity and social engagement. It addresses concerns about the learning process and learning experiences. It develops and collaborates with play-based learning design and experiences to engage in social and physical movement as part of the learning process. It features responses and understands the actions of preschool children in the technology of play-based learning utterances and sense-making. It demonstrates a focus on learning and a level of engagement through physical activities. It improves the play-based learning of the learners (Aslan et al., 2022) Moreover, it could imply that the extent of play-based learning in kindergarten it affect the learning process of the respondents and it can be used as effective tool to -develop holistically the 7 domains of early childhood.

The results show that the experimental group had a significant improvement in emotional regulation compared to the control group. This suggests that the program used with the experimental group was effective in improving children's ability to recognize, manage, and express their emotions appropriately. The positive changes indicate that structured activities, like play-based learning, socio-emotional exercises, or guided strategies, can help children develop better self-regulation skills. In contrast, the control group showed little to no improvement. This highlights the need for targeted strategies instead of relying only on traditional or unstructured experiences. The findings emphasize the value of focused interventions in building emotional resilience and self-control in children.

- *Significant Difference between Pretest and Posttest as Rated by the Parents*

This part presents the results of the difference between the pretest and posttest as rated by the parents between the control and experimental.

Table 14 Control and Experimental Groups' Emotional Regulation Between Pre-test and Post-test as Rated by the Parents in Each Group

Group	Test	Mean	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Control	Pre	2.50	0.010	Reject Ho	Significant
	Post	2.79			
Experimental	Pre	2.27	0.006	Reject Ho	Significant
	Post	2.71			

Statistics in table 16 reflected the computed control group of pre-test and post-test p-value of 0.010 interpreted as "significant". Experimental group of pre-test and post-test pvalue 0.006 interpreted as "significant" and thus, it can be said that there is significant difference between the control and experimental group on emotion regulation of play-based learning in kindergartens. Parents' ratings indicate that, in the absence of the intervention implemented in the experimental group, children in the control group demonstrated minimal improvement in emotional regulation skills. This finding underscores the necessity of structured strategies to enhance coping mechanisms in preschool children. The experimental group demonstrated notable improvements in their emotional regulation skills after implementing play-based learning. Parents observed that their children were capable of identifying and expressing their emotions appropriately. This implies that students exposed to a structured paly often demonstrate better emotional regulation because play-based learning provides repeated opportunities for them to recognize, express, manage, and adjust their emotions in authentic social situations. For instance, during a counting game, a child loses and initially cries or becomes upset. The teacher guides the child to express feelings verbally and encourages another attempt. Through repeated exposure to play learning, learners learn that losing is temporary and that emotions can be managed constructively rather than through tantrums (Denham et al., 2012). Thus, kindergarten learners strengthen self-regulation, emotional control, and social competence when they repeatedly encounter challenges, social interactions, and decision-making experiences that require them to regulate their feelings and behavior.

Parents are also critic al stakeholders and participants in the development of preschoolers' social and emotional skills. Training programs in which parents are trained in behavior management and other techniques to develop student social and emotional skills have been shown to be effective in minimizing disruptive behavior and developing social and emotional skills in children (Bierman & Motamedi, 2015; Carr et al., 2017).

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➢ *The Difference between the Mean Gain Results of Control and Experimental Groups as Rated by their Teachers*

Groups	Mean Rank	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Control	9.04	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Experimental	20.57			

For Emotional Control, Children in the experimental group demonstrated markedly higher emotional control (Mean Rank = 22.5) compared to the control group (Mean Rank = 8.0), with a p-value of 0.00 indicating strong statistical significance. This suggests that play-based learning fosters self-regulation and impulse management. According to Galindo and Vertulfo (2025), play-based environments allow children to rehearse emotional responses in low-stakes settings, enhancing their ability to remain calm and composed during challenges. Larsen et al. (2025) further emphasize that child-directed play supports executive function development, which is foundational to emotional control.

Table 15 Results of the Mean Gain Difference between the Control and Experimental Groups in each Parameter

Parameters	Groups	Mean Rank	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Emotional Control	Control	8.00	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
	Experimental	22.50			
Emotional Expression	Control	8.37	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
	Experimental	22.11			
Frustration Tolerance	Control	8.00	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
	Experimental	22.50			
Social Interaction and Emotional Regulation	Control	8.00	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
	Experimental	22.50			
Self-Soothing and Recovery	Control	8.17	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
	Experimental	22.32			

About Emotional Expression, the experimental group also showed significant gains in emotional expression (Mean Rank = 22.11 vs. 8.37), indicating improved ability to articulate feelings. Play-based learning encourages expressive language and symbolic representation, which are critical for emotional literacy. Galindo and Vertulfo (2025) note that imaginative play and role-playing activities provide safe spaces for children to explore and express emotions, contributing to emotional fluency. This aligns with Denham et al. (2012), who found that emotional expression in early childhood predicts later social competence and academic success.

Regarding Frustration Tolerance, it improved significantly in the experimental group (Mean Rank = 22.5 vs. 8.0), suggesting that play-based learning helps children develop resilience. Through repeated exposure to problemsolving and negotiation in play, learners build coping mechanisms for setbacks. Larsen et al. (2025) argue that play allows children to experience and resolve minor frustrations, which strengthens their emotional endurance. This finding supports the integration of structured play to scaffold emotional resilience in early education.

Concerning Social Interaction and Emotional Regulation, the highest gains were observed in the experimental group (Mean Rank = 22.5 vs. 8.0), underscoring the socialemotional benefits of collaborative play. Peer interaction during play fosters empathy, turn-taking, and emotional responsiveness. Galindo and Vertulfo (2025) highlighted that play-based learning cultivates a sense of community and shared emotional understanding among young learners. These outcomes were consistent with Whitebread et al. (2017), who emphasized the role of play in developing social cognition and emotional regulation.

For self-soothing and recovery, result showed significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group (Mean Rank = 22.32 vs. 8.17), indicating that play helps children manage emotional distress and recover from agitation. Quiet play, sensory activities, and imaginative scenarios provide calming experiences that support emotional recovery. Larsen et al. (2025) found that teacher-facilitated play can guide children toward selfregulatory strategies, especially in emotionally charged moments.

➢ *The Difference between the Mean Gain Results of Control and Experimental Groups as Rated by their Parents*

Table 16 presents the results of students' emotional regulation competence as observed by their parents

Table 16 Results of the Mean Gain Difference between the Control and Experimental Group Based on Parents' Observation

Groups	Mean Rank	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Control	9.04	0.000	Reject Ho	Signficant
Experimental	20.57			

Results revealed that parents of learners in the play-based learning group observed significant ($P<0.05$) improvements in their children's emotional regulation competencies compared to those in the control group. The significant difference in mean ranks indicates that children exposed to play-based strategies were better able to manage

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their emotions, recover from distress, and interact socially with greater emotional awareness.

This aligns with findings from Galindo and Vertulfo (2025), who emphasized that play-based learning environments allow children to rehearse emotional responses and develop self-regulation through imaginative and social play. Similarly, Larsen et al. (2025) found that teacherfacilitated play enhances children's ability to self-soothe and express emotions constructively, especially when supported by adult scaffolding and peer interaction.

The statistical significance ($p = 0.000$) confirms that these observed improvements are not due to chance, but rather to the structured emotional experiences embedded in play-based learning. Parents likely noticed increased patience, better frustration tolerance, and more appropriate emotional expression in daily routines, the key indicators of emotional competence in early childhood.

➢ *Teacher's Insights in Implementing Play-Based Learning*

This part presents the results of the teacher's insights in implementing play-based learning stated by the kindergarten teachers of Ayungon District 2. There are 18 Kindergarten Teachers including the researcher stated their responses of the insights of play-based learning in kindergarten. As seen in Table 17, two themes were generated, Advantages and Disadvantages of play-based learning.

- *Theme 1: Advantages of Play-Based Learning*

This theme highlights the perceived benefits of playbased learning as experienced and observed by teachers in the implementation.

✓ *Fostering Holistic Development*.

This subtheme captures teachers' perceptions of how play-based learning supports emotional, cognitive, social, and physical development in young learners. Teachers consistently emphasized that playbased learning nurtures the whole child. It was seen as a dynamic approach that integrates multiple domains of development.

▪ *Teachers Said:*

"Play allows children to grow in all aspects, not just academically but emotionally and socially." "We see them becoming more confident, expressive, and cooperative through play."

These insights affirm the role of play in promoting integrated development. According to Whitebread et al. (2017), play supports executive function, emotional regulation, and social competence, making it essential for early childhood education. Thus, structured and free play should be incorporated into daily routines to balance developmental goals.

Another sub-theme is *Enhancing Creativity and Critical Thinking.* This reflects teachers' observations of increased imaginative thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making among learners engaged in play. Educators noted that children engaged in play-based learning demonstrated more original ideas and independent thinking.

▪ *Teachers Said:*

"When children play, they invent, imagine, and solve problems. It's where critical thinking begins." "They ask more questions and try different solutions during play."

Table 17 Teacher's Insights of Play-Based Learning as Stated in Kindergarten Teachers of Ayungon District 2

Advantages
Fostering holistic development
Enhance creativity and critical thinking
Encourage active learning and exploration
Disadvantages
Structural and logistical constraints
Stakeholder Expectations and Perceptions
Lack of teacher's training and upskilling/ professional development
Lack of time
Difficult to handle the pupil's behavior
Parent's perception of unproductive procedural of learning

These findings align with Galindo and Vertulfo (2025), who argue that imaginative play fosters divergent thinking and emotional flexibility. Play creates a safe space for experimentation and innovation. Thus, designing openended play scenarios that encourage exploration and problem-solving is suggested. They also emphasize the use of thematic play to integrate academic content with creative inquiry.

Encouraging Active Learning and Exploration. This subtheme captures how play-based learning promotes learner agency, curiosity, and engagement through hands-on experiences.

Teachers observed that children were more engaged and retained information better when learning was active and exploratory. Teachers said: "They don't just sit and listen, they move, talk, and explore. That's real learning." "Play gives them freedom to discover things on their own, which builds confidence and curiosity."

This implies that active learning through play supports deeper cognitive processing and emotional investment. Larsen et al. (2025) emphasize that experiential engagement leads to meaningful learning outcomes. Thus, teachers need to integrate inquiry-based play into lesson plans, provide

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materials that stimulate sensory exploration and allow for self-directed learning (Larsen et al., 2025).

- *Theme 1: Dis-Advantages of Play-Based Learning*

Structural and Logistical Constraints. This subtheme refers to Time Constraints and Curriculum Pressure. Teachers highlighted the difficulty of embedding play-based learning within rigid schedules and academic requirements. Many felt that mandated curriculum targets left little room for sustained play.

✓ *One Teacher Mentioned:*

"Play consumed a lot of time, so we can't meet curriculum goals."

✓ *Teachers Said:*

"There is not enough time in the day to balance play andacademic tasks."

Thus, without protected time, play risks being marginalized, reducing opportunities for emotional regulation and holistic growth. Denham et al. (2012) caution that rigid schedules undermine the socio-emotional benefits of play. Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009) suggested that Schools should allocate daily play blocks and integrate play into academic lessons to maximize developmental outcomes.

Stakeholder Pressure and Misconceptions. This subtheme reflects external pressures from parents and institutional expectations that undervalue play as a legitimate learning strategy. Teachers felt constrained by parental expectations for academic rigor and skepticism about play's educational value.

✓ *Teachers Shared:*

"Some parents think play is a waste of time. They want worksheets and grades." "We're pressured to show results, not just joyful learning."

Results imply that misconceptions about play can lead to its marginalization. Galindo and Vertulfo (2025) emphasized the need for stakeholder education to reposition play as a foundation for emotional and cognitive development. Thus, the school has to conduct parent orientations and showcase developmental outcomes from play-based activities.

Lack of Teacher Training and Upskilling/Professional Development. This subtheme points to the importance of teachers training in the implementation of the play-based learning.

Teachers emphasized that the successful implementation of play-based learning requires teachers to possess specialized knowledge and skills in facilitating meaningful play experiences. However, the teacher reported: "I have limited training opportunities and insufficient professional development programs related to play-based pedagogy."

As a result, they may struggle to design developmentally appropriate activities, integrate learning objectives into play, and assess learning outcomes effectively. Without adequate training, teachers may return to traditional instructional approaches or implement play activities without maximizing their educational value. This finding suggests the need for continuous capacity-building programs that equip teachers with the competencies necessary to facilitate high-quality play-based instruction.

Lack of Time. This is another subtheme that is a problem in implementing play based learning.

Another problem identified by a teacher was the limited instructional time available to implement play-based activities.

✓ *The Teacher Noted:*

"Balancing curriculum requirements, learning competencies, assessments, and classroom routines within a fixed schedule often leaves insufficient time for meaningful play experiences."

Since play-based learning requires enough time for exploration, interaction, and reflection, time limitation may lead teachers to shorten activities or prioritize academic tasks perceived as more urgent.

Difficulty in Handling Pupils' Behavior. Is another subtheme for disadvantages. Challenges in managing learners' behavior during play activities was experience by the teacher handling the class. Because play-based learning encourages movement, interaction, and active participation, classrooms may become noisy and difficult to control, particularly when teachers are handling large groups of children.

✓ *The Teacher Said:*

" Some pupils may become overly excited, engage in conflicts with peers, or have difficulty following rules and instructions."

Managing these behaviors requires strong classroom management skills and careful facilitation to ensure that play remains productive and aligned with learning goals. Teachers emphasized that maintaining order while preserving children's freedom to explore can be a demanding aspect of play-based instruction.

Parents' Perception of Play as an Unproductive Learning Process. This is another subtheme under disadvantages. Several participants expressed concerns regarding parents' misconceptions about play-based learning. Some parents tend to associate learning primarily with worksheets, seatwork, and direct instruction, leading them to perceive play activities as merely recreational rather than educational.

✓ *The Teacher Said:*

"Some parents ask me whether their children really learn in playing"

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This means that parents seem to question the effectiveness of play-based approaches or underestimate the learning taking place during these activities.

Such perceptions can create challenges for teachers who must explain and justify the educational value of play. This finding emphasized the need for stronger parent orientation and communication programs to increase awareness of how play contributes to children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based from the findings of the study, it has been concluded that the emotional regulation through play-based learning in kindergarten has significant differences between control and experimental group, yet as they continue to implement the curriculum resulted to advantages and disadvantages of play-based learning. Lesson plan can be crafted to fit the allocated time and teachers can deliver playbased learning effectively. It improves the emotion regulation of kindergarten learners.

RECOMMENDATION

Based from the results of the study, it has been concluded that the proposed lesson plan crafted be implemented for the teachers to help them cope the time and help achieved the emotion regulation of kindergarten learners through play-based learning.

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